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With all he had the unconquerable will of a hero.

In making Satan fight to regain heaven, MILTON spoilt him for a devil. He is not a whit more diabolical than SHAKESPEARE'S Coriolanus! How out of keeping it is to have Satan undertake the easier enterprise of seducing the new race called Man, "less in power and excellence!"

After a long debate in the synod of the gods, Satan, self-appointed, heroically takes his solitary flight through hell, fights heroically with Death, then wings his way, heroically, through Chaos and old Night, and finally, brings heroically (?) to grief a pair of pigmy innocents!

One glance at Iago will be enough. He had not been deprived of the lieutenantcy which he was seeking. In his own estimation he was worthy the position, but with Othello Cassio was the man. He had no motive for his conduct except of his own diabolical hatching; yet how skilfully he brought the direst results to that happy pair! He was a devil!

After all is said, 'Paradise Lost' is intensely interesting. But suppose the workmanship surpassed the material!

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### THE NOMINATIVE ABSOLUTE IN ENGLISH.

Professor GILDERSLEEVE in his excellent 'Latin Grammar' (§ 409) says: "The Ablative Absolute may be translated by the English Objective Absolute, which is a close equivalent." Should the English equivalent of the ablative absolute be called the objective absolute? Here is an illustrative example, with its translations: "Xerxes regnante" (= Quum Xerxes regnaret), *Xerxes reigning*. *When Xerxes was reigning. In the reign of Xerxes.*

Is "Xerxes reigning" the English objective absolute, or "In the reign of Xerxes"? Not the latter, surely, for the preposition *in* does anything else but absolve the syntactical connection. In Latin, the ablative absolute absolves syntactical connection; in Greek, the genitive absolute; in English, the—what? the functional relations are never disturbed.

"When Xerxes was reigning" is syntacti-

cally connected with the main sentence, so also is "In the reign of Xerxes," but "Xerxes reigning" is not thus connected and therefore *absolute*. Is it objective absolute? It is nominative absolute.

To say that "Xerxes reigning" is objective absolute is to say that "Xerxes" is in the objective case. To say that "Xerxes" is objective is to admit a vital syntactical connection with the principal sentence, for "reigning" does not govern "Xerxes." When is a noun in the objective case? When it is object of an active transitive verb, or of a preposition. It is the syntactical connection, expressed or implied, that makes it the object. The mere omission of the governing word does not make it "absolute." Is it not a contradiction to say objective absolute?

A noun in the objective case is *governed*, but a noun in the nominative *governs*. The noun (*Haupt-wort*) in the nominative is preeminently, the 'head-word': the verb agrees with it and not it with the verb. The nominative, syntactically speaking, holds the reins, the effect of the verb and adjective on the noun is logical and not syntactical.

A noun in the objective case is ruled by something within the sentence, but a noun in the nominative—in principal or subordinate clause—is not so ruled. Take the clause "When Xerxes was reigning." Whence comes the demand for making it "Xerxes reigning"? From the higher rhetorical principle of condensation. Rhetoric asks "Xerxes" to let go "was reigning," which done, the syntactical connection made by the conjunctive adverb *when* is dissolved, and the nominative "Xerxes" absolved of its verb in a finite mode.

But is it nominative absolute? It is not objective, as has been argued. It is not possessive, nor dative. It must be nominative.

Is "Xerxes" in any case? Every noun performing a function in a sentence will have a case. In MEIKLEJOHN'S 'English Grammar' is this rule: "A Noun and an Adjective, or a Noun and a Participle, or a Noun and an Adjective Phrase,—not syntactically connected with any other word in the sentence,—are put in the Nominative Absolute."

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